George Washington successfully concludes CART II

By MCSN Tatiana Avery,
USS George Washington
Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN – Forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) successfully completed its command assessment of readiness and training (CART II) Aug. 31.

The five-day assessment tested shipboard administration and material readiness, as well as the shipboard training teams' ability to plan, brief, execute and debrief complex drill sets to establish a proficient foundation for George Washington's upcoming final evaluation period (FEP).

"CART II is an opportunity to develop our training teams and watch standers," said Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Callan, *George Washington's* training officer. "CART II is an assessment of our readiness and training, and Afloat Training Group (ATG) assessors are here to evaluate not just the way we do business, but also our training teams."

ABHAN Curran Gause, from Grand Forks, N.D., directs a F/A-18E Super Hornet from the "Royal Maces" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 27 aboard the flight deck of the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73).
U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Ricardo R. Guzman

Thirty-three assessors from ATG arrived aboard to evaluate the ship's integrated training team and their proficiency in several evolutions. Subject-matter experts in various fields such as damage control, engineering, navigation and seamanship worked with their assigned departments to evaluate the aircraft carrier's Sailors.

"I am encouraged by our efforts with the ATG inspectors and I know that everyone on the ship will take the time to look at all major and minor hits in order to get ready for FEP," said Capt. G.J. Fenton, *George Washington's* commanding officer. "We make ourselves a better team every day and I'm extremely pleased with our performance."

CART II events included barricade drills with Air department, man overboard and recovery drills with Deck department and mass casualty drills with Medical department. *George Washington* also held several general quarters (GQ) drills to ensure the Sailors understood the purpose of responding to shipboard casualties.

"The operations we were drilled on are necessary lifesaving evolutions," said Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class John McNeil, from Conway, S.C. "We have to work together to fight the ship during a general quarters scenario. The rigid-hulled inflatable boat is a secondary method used to save lives during a man overboard drill and we need to stay proficient. If we don't do this right when the time comes, somebody's dead."

Every *George Washington* Sailor took part in demonstrating their skills; maintaining the conditional readiness of the ship and facing any casualty.

"Navigation department's contribution to CART II was mostly administrative, but still vital to *George Washington* because we are responsible for the safe navigation of

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USS Bonhomme Richard promotes Women-at-Sea program

By MC3 Karen Blankenship,
Amphibious Squadron 11 Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN - Sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship *USS Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) are working to help female service members by promoting the Women at Sea (WAS) program while on deployment in the Western Pacific.

Women at Sea is a program that serves as an informal forum for female Sailors and Marines to share experiences and address issues that may arise while at sea.

Ensign Roberta Becker said that the monthly meetings have covered topics such as personal safety on and off the ship, berthing etiquette, and personal and professional development.

"Having a positive environment to turn to when experiencing something as stressful as shipboard life is vital to a person's well-being," said Becker. "The WAS program allows females to grow both personally and professionally in a well-rounded and supportive way."

A major theme of the 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative is equipping Sailors, Marines and their families to meet the challenges of a military career. Programs like Women at Sea support this initiative by providing opportunities for meaningful and valued work across a career whether in the military or later in the civilian workforce.

Chief Cryptologic Technician (Collection) Misty Rambo said that she wanted to help bring the program aboard because she felt it would be especially beneficial for Sailors and Marines who had not deployed before.

"We wanted to give them a perspective on what to expect on deployment, to minimize the culture shock and to ensure we set them up for success," said Rambo.

Becker said that while the meetings are held on a monthly basis, the mentorship that the program fosters continues year round.

"Mentorship is beneficial to junior Sailors and leaders," said Rambo. "It allows junior Sailors to voice their concerns and ideas in a nonjudgmental environment and enables leaders the opportunity to share their experiences and keep a pulse on the needs and concerns of those who will one day be our relief, whether in the Wardroom or the Chiefs Mess."

Programs like Women at Sea ensure the Navy not only helps Sailors grow in their personal and professional lives, but also sets them up for success in their Navy careers.

"The program helps encourage women aboard to become skilled leaders and accomplished Sailors," said Becker.

While the Navy has a long history, women have only served aboard warships since the repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law in 1994.

"This program will hopefully reinforce the pride and appreciation for those (women) who have paved the way for us to be able to serve alongside our brethren," said Rambo.

Female Sailors and Marines who are interested in learning more about the program are encouraged to attend the meetings, which are posted in the ship's plan of the day.

Bonhomme Richard, commanded by Capt. Daniel Dusek, is the lead ship of the only forward-deployed amphibious ready group and is currently operating in the 7th Fleet Area of Operations.

(Left) ASAN Lu Bai, AS3 Shaofang Fan and AS3 Elyse Campbell use a preservation iron to provide additional support on a 3-ton jack in the hangar bay aboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship *USS Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6).
U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Russell